

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY, FINANCE AND  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES,  
WIGSTON ON TUESDAY 25 MARCH 2014, COMMENCING AT 8.00 P.M.**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor Mrs S B Morris – Chair  
Councillor Mrs L Eaton – Vice Chair

Councillors L A Bentley, G A Boulter, J W Boyce, Mrs J M Gore, K J Loydall, Mrs R  
Kanabar and R E R Morris

Officers in Attendance: Mrs A Court, J Dickson, Ms K Garcha, A Kupusarevic, J Lee  
and G Richardson.

Also in Attendance: John Cornett (KPMG) and Tim Ridout (CW Audit)

Min Ref	Narrative	Officer Resp
82.	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	GR
83.	<p><b><u>APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	
84.	<p><b><u>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Mrs L Eaton noted that she was connected with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) and that she could therefore not take part in the respective part of the debate and vote that related to SSAFA on agenda item 14.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce noted that he had formerly been an employee of Age UK and Councillors G A Boulter and J M Gore noted that they had an existing interest with Age UK, which prevented each of them from taking part in the respective part of the debate and vote that related to Age UK on agenda item 14.</p>	
85.	<p><b><u>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</u></b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4 February 2014, be taken as read, confirmed and signed, subject to the amendment stated above.</p>	GR
86.	<p><b><u>ACTION LIST</u></b></p>	

	Members noted the contents of the Action List.	
87.	<p><b><u>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>	
88.	<p><b><u>EXTERNAL AUDIT – AUDIT PLAN 2014/15</u></b></p> <p>John Cornett outlined the report and highlighted some key issues to Members. He noted that the key risk to the Council is the review of the Pension Scheme, which is re-valued every three years. He confirmed that the role of the audit team would be to consider the accuracy of the information provided and the resulting level of risk. He added that this review was required to be undertaken by all Local Authorities.</p> <p>He commented that there was not a significant increase in risk and the extra information provided in the report simply highlighted the work undertaken by the auditors.</p> <p>He concluded by pointing out the value for money risk, which considered the ability of the Council to deliver the required savings. This would continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Members thanked the auditors for their work.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members noted the contents of the report.</p>	
89.	<p><b><u>EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS</u></b></p> <p>John Cornett outlined his report, which considered the claims and returns submitted to Central Government in 2012/13.</p> <p>He noted that there was no issues in relation to the Non-Domestic Rates and that an unqualified certificate had been given.</p> <p>In relation to the pooling of Housing Capital Receipts, the audit had identified that the Council had overpaid a small amount to DCLG and the Council needed to ensure that this did not happen again. He confirmed that they had agreed new controls with Officers. He added that this was a minor issue which had been addressed and that DCLG have refunded the overpayment.</p> <p>He discussed the Housing and Council Tax Benefit claim return. He noted that this was a complex claim owing to the number of claimants, the complexity of the claims and the</p>	

	<p>difficulties of regularly changing circumstances. Due to these complexities, he confirmed that it was entirely normal to have a small qualified certificate in relation to Housing and Council Tax Benefit and assured Members that the outcome was not suggestive of any major problems.</p> <p>He finally noted that there was a slight variation in the fee that was to be charged by the auditors for their work. The indicative fee had increased slightly to reflect the audit of the Housing Capital Receipts return which had not been anticipated. The reason for this unexpected change was the fact that the Council's pooling of Housing Capital Receipts had exceeded the <i>de minimis</i> threshold for completing the return, which had not been predicted.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members noted the contents of the report.</p>	
90.	<p><b><u>INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2013/14 AND AUDIT PLAN 2014 – 2017</u></b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer outlined the report and noted that its format and content had been updated on the basis of the comments made by Members at the previous Committee meeting. He added that the figures given for the final two years of the plan were indicative only and were subject to change.</p> <p>Tim Ridout first discussed the progress report for 2013/14. He noted that the internal audit team was working in accordance with the original plan and expected to complete on time. He further noted that there were no items of particular concern and added that of 106 recommendations carried forward only 20 remain to be completed, details of which were set out in the report.</p> <p>Members thanked Tim Ridout for his work on simplifying the report.</p> <p>A question was asked as to why the implementation date for Disabled Facilities Grant recommendations had been extended so significantly. The Chair confirmed that this was a very complex matter so what seemed like a long time to complete the recommendation was not in reality.</p> <p>Members queried why in-house options were being considered to bring Disabled Facilities Grants and Council stock adaptations under one umbrella and it was noted that this was intended to improve the services and make them more consistent and efficient.</p> <p>A question was asked as to why a consideration of public</p>	

	<p>health issues does not figure in the pest control service review and the Chair confirmed that the duty of the Council was simply to signpost residents to ensure that the problem is dealt with, not to run a service itself.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the software supplier's reports would be completed before the end of April. It was also confirmed that the new IT software package for risk management was intended as a measure to help embed it.</p> <p>Tim Ridout went on to discuss the audit plan for 2014-2017. He noted that the internal audit standards required the Council to put into place an indicative plan for the following two years, but that this will obviously need to be reviewed closer to the time.</p> <p>He added that the plan aimed to put provisions in place to look at targeted work on fraud detection and prevention and to give assurance in the Council's counter-fraud arrangements. It would also look at strategic procurement, value for money on shared services and front line services, which are considered most important to the Council.</p> <p>Members requested that some time be spent on carrying out an audit of the partnership working and funding, as it was recognised that some of this funding and partnership working was likely to change and possibly even finish in the future. It was also requested that this should include a value for money exercise to determine whether work could have been done more effectively.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Noted the content of the progress report for 2013/14;</li> <li>(2) Approved the Audit Plan and noted that the Plans for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are indicative at this stage and the days that are allocated to each audit for these future years may change following the reviews in 2014/15; and</li> <li>(3) Requested that an audit of the partnership working and funding arrangements was carried out.</li> </ul>	
91.	<p><b><u>PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS, TREASURY AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES</u></b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer noted that this was a statutory report which is required to be produced every year. This report had been compiled in conjunction with external advisers and was very detailed and complex.</p>	

	<p>A question was asked as to why the report noted that the repayment period for the redevelopment of the leisure facilities was expressed to be up to 35 years when a 20 year repayment period had been mentioned at a previous meeting. The Chief Financial Officer and the Chair confirmed that the situation had changed since the earlier meeting after discussions with external advisers and external audit. Consideration was being given as to which was the most cost effective and sustainable method of borrowing the money and that if a longer period was deemed to be more efficient then this would be reported to Members for information. It was confirmed that borrowing repayments over a longer period could be less to the Council in terms of the amount repayable per annum.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that when the initial decision as to borrowing was made this longer period of repayment was not an option, but now that it had become apparent further work was being done to consider it.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs J M Gore abstained from the vote.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The Prudential Indicators 2014/15;</li> <li>(2) The Treasury Strategy and Plan 2014/15; and</li> <li>(3) The Investment Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>92.</b></p>	<p><b><u>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2013/14 TO 2016/17</u></b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer noted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy was a very important document as it sets out the projections for the Council's finances to 2016/17. It also highlights the key issues and risks to be considered and serves as a reminder to Members to ensure that money is being spent on the Council's priorities as appropriate.</p> <p>He noted that the financial model identifies a potential and significant funding deficit for 2015/16. He further noted that the indication is towards a greater deficit in 2016/17, but that this is based on several assumptions and estimates and it is susceptible to change; however, it is important to look forward and plan ways to tackle the deficit as soon as possible.</p> <p>Members thanked the Chief Financial Officer for the document. They recognised the increasing shortfalls in the budget but felt that this was part of the budgetary process. They were looking</p>	

	<p>at a redesign of services offered rather than a service reduction and noted that the key was flexibility.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer was asked about the impact of the Chancellor’s Budget on the Council and it was confirmed that very little had been mentioned in relation to Local Authorities. It was also confirmed that the Council was still in ongoing dialogue with Central Government as to whether the Borough’s population had gone up or down following the 2011 Census.</p> <p>It was requested that the Council’s fourth Corporate Priority be amended to recognise that the Council works with several partner agencies in creating a safer Borough, and not just the Police.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs J M Gore abstained from the vote.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in the report.</p>	
<p>93.</p>	<p><b><u>CORPORATE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND SOCIAL VALUE POLICY</u></b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer noted that this report outlined a new Procurement Strategy which the Council is required to have. This report followed a report to Members at the October meeting of the Committee, which set out an interim strategy. It was noted that the Council had taken the decision to embed its Social Value Policy within the Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer noted that the new interim strategy had been reviewed and would assure that Officers comply with their duty to achieve best value during the procurement process and it was intended that Officers from the Legal and Finance teams would meet to further make the strategy more robust.</p> <p>Members asked that it be added to the “key principles” section of the Strategy that, where possible, the Council will consider using local suppliers and tradesmen, provided that best value is secured, and that it will also consider using contractors who pay their workers the Living Wage. It was also added that Officers should consider what further steps could be taken to get procurement news out locally.</p> <p>Councillor G A Boulter left the room during the debate so did not vote.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved the revised Corporate Procurement Strategy and action plan and the new Social</p>	

	Value Policy.	
94.	<p><b><u>RESIDENT FORUMS BUDGET POSITIONS</u></b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer outlined the report, which set out the requests from the respective Resident Forums. He noted that as the South Wigston Resident Forum was yet to meet, one of the recommendations was to delegate this part of the approval to the Chief Financial Officer and the Chair of the Committee such that the requests could be fed into the Council's final Statement of Accounts.</p> <p>It was agreed that this responsibility would be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer in conjunction with the Vice Chair of the Committee, as the Chair of the Committee was also the Chair of the South Wigston Residents Forum.</p> <p>Members asked about grit bins and why these were proposed only on some roads when it was thought that there had been more demand for them. It was confirmed that those roads listed in the report were the only roads that had been agreed at the respective Resident Forums.</p> <p>Members commented that the font size used in the report was too small and requested that this be made larger in the future.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Members noted the position of the Forum's budget;</li> <li>(2) Members approved the allocations requested by the Forums as set out in the report;</li> <li>(3) Members approved the recommendations in the verbal update relating to the Oadby Residents Forum; and</li> <li>(4) Delegated powers are given to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Vice Chair of the Policy Finance and Development Committee to approve requests put forward by the South Wigston Residents Forum.</li> </ol>	
95.	<p><b><u>COUNCIL CORE FUNDING</u></b></p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer set out the recommendations as contained within the report.</p> <p>Members noted that they were happy to give an indication that funding will be made available but that each organisation will have to apply for the same and the decision as to whether to</p>	

	<p>make the grant will depend on the financial constraints at the time of the application.</p> <p>Those Members who had declared an interest in this agenda item did not take part in the debate and voting in relation to their respective interests and they left the room accordingly.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That:</p> <p>(1) Members agreed to fund Age UK £5,500 for 2014/15 subject to all Service Level Agreement Targets being met;</p> <p>(2) Members agree to fund Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association £2,500 for 2014/15 subject to all Service level Agreement Targets being met and formal request being made to the Council; and</p> <p>(3) Members agreed to extend the option of funding for a further period of two years, subject to a valid request being made by the respective organisation and such decision being made at the discretion of the Council on the basis of the financial constraints at the time of the application.</p>	
96.	<p><b><u>CHARGING SCHEME FOR THE ISSUING OR AMENDMENT OF STREET NAMES AND NUMBERS</u></b></p> <p>The Building Control Manager outlined the report and noted that the Council did not presently charge for the service and that this was a request to invoke a charging scheme.</p> <p>He confirmed that any compensation payable under this scheme would have to be paid by the individual making the request to renumber and that there would be no comeback on the Council whatsoever.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members authorise the introduction of the charging scheme as set out in the report.</p>	
97.	<p><b><u>RETURNING OFFICERS FEES FOR 2014/15</u></b></p> <p>It was noted that this report was required to be presented to Members but that they could not influence its contents.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members formally approved the adoption of the scale of fees for the 2014/15 financial year as set out in the report.</p>	
98.	<p><b><u>PUBLIC REALM WORKS WITHIN WIGSTON AND OADBY</u></b></p>	



	<p><b><u>TOWN CENTRES</u></b></p> <p>The Director of Services outlined the report. She noted that South Wigston had been excluded from the report as Leicestershire County Council had not felt it appropriate to include South Wigston owing to the ERDF funding that it had received. Therefore in order to secure a bid for Oadby and Wigston it was felt expedient to remove South Wigston from the bid.</p> <p>Members requested a report back to the Committee to confirm initial expenditure, at which point they could make a decision as to whether to spend any left over monies on a similar sign for South Wigston.</p> <p>The Director of Services confirmed the proposed bus shelters would be constructed of robust and sustainable materials which will be able to withstand anti-social behaviour.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved the spending of approximately £20,000 - £21,000 on display screens in Oadby and Wigston town centres, bus shelters in Oadby and the public art in Wigston to be funded from the remaining money in the ERDF Schemes Reserve, with a further report back to Committee to confirm the initial expenditure and determine whether to spend any left over monies on a display screen in South Wigston.</p>	
99.	<p><b><u>TAKING CONTROL OF GOODS REGULATIONS 2013</u></b></p> <p>The Interim Head of Customer Services noted that this report set out the main changes to the legislation regarding debt collection and the work of the Council's bailiffs, which had required the Council to amend its own procedure.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The new hours of operation; and</li> <li>(2) That operational issues are delegated to the Head of Service in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer.</li> </ul>	
100.	<p><b><u>CUSTOMER SERVICES REVIEW</u></b></p> <p>It was moved and seconded that this trial should be extended for a further period of three months after which time it should be reported to the new Customer Services Working Group.</p> <p>Members noted that more work was needed, as this was a redesign of the service rather than a reduction.</p>	

	<p>Members requested that the email update that had been circulated should be resent, as there were concerns that it had not been received by some members.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved the changes to customer services delivery channels for a further three month period after which time it should be reported back to the new Customer Services Working Group.</p>	
101.	<p><b><u>PROGRESS WITH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE BOROUGH</u></b></p> <p>The Director of Services noted that this report was intended as an update to Members on this ongoing project.</p> <p>It was noted that the delegated powers proposed within the second recommendation of the report were intended to give flexibility and to allow preparatory work to be done. It was recognised that there may on occasion be a need to enter into commercial discussions with consultants before reporting to Members for timeliness; however, it was confirmed that no commitment would ever be made without the matter first being considered by Members at the relevant Committee.</p> <p>Members asked that the report on the proposal to use the former scout hut land as an extension to the Oadby cemetery be brought to Committee as soon as possible, as the cemetery continued to near full capacity.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Noted the position with regard to the potential development opportunities in the Borough;</li> <li>(2) Approved the establishment of a delegated system to enable the Chief Executive and/or the Director of Services in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Leader of the Council and/or the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee to approve the spending of money to undertake valuations, initial studies and any other necessary work in support of potential regeneration opportunities without the need to report to Committee;</li> <li>(3) Noted the position with regard to the provision of land for burials and cremations and that further consideration of the opportunity to consider the purchase of new land in the Borough for use as a cemetery is referred to Place Shaping Working Group; and</li> </ul>	

	<p>(4) Noted the potential risk of building Council homes in the current climate.</p>	
<p><b>102.</b></p>	<p><b><u>LEISURE MANAGEMENT UPDATE</u></b></p> <p>The Director of Services noted that the interim contract had been entered into, with the new providers to take over responsibility from 1 April 2014. She further noted that there was a recommendation to extend the agreement with RPT Consulting on this project, which was estimated to cost a maximum of £15,000 for support over the coming year.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Noted the progress to date with the new Leisure Contract providers, SLM Ltd;</li> <li>(2) Approved a 12 month extension of the arrangements with RPT Consulting to provide project management support for the inception of the contract and construction phase, the costs to be funded from the Management of Change reserve; and</li> <li>(3) Delegated to the Director of Services and the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee the negotiation of interim arrangements with SLM Ltd to provide catering facilities at Brocks Hill Country Park.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>103.</b></p>	<p><b><u>HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY</u></b></p> <p>The Head of Corporate Resources noted that the Council has a duty to enforce health and safety at work and comply with the health and safety Regulations. She noted that the Regulations place a primary duty of care on the employer and the management team to ensure that risk assessments, training and emergency procedures are in place. She confirmed that this was a comprehensive policy which required the approval of Members and the sign off of the policy statement by the Chief Executive and the Leader.</p> <p>Members noted that as they had ultimate responsibility, they would like to have health and safety incidents reported to them, perhaps on an annual basis unless there is a serious incident which requires immediate reporting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved and adopted the Health and Safety policy</p>	

<p><b>104.</b></p>	<p><b><u>CORPORATE RESOURCES POLICIES</u></b></p> <p>The Head of Corporate Resources gave an overview of the policies, including their function and purpose.</p> <p>She noted that there was some debate as to whether the policy and procedures should be separate or in one combined document, but that it was recommended by ACAS and the Unions that the two were combined into one comprehensive document to streamline and simplify the process, owing to the “human” nature of such policies. The Chair agreed that she had previously stated and still concurred that they should be combined as a policy and procedure.</p> <p>A question was asked as to whether it would be plausible to carry out all of those performance management measures set out in the Employee Performance Management policy and procedure. The Head of Corporate Resources noted that it was essential for all managers to be carrying out these measures to ensure the appropriate support is afforded to all Officers and to adequately monitor performance. The Director of Services added that this was even more important that this support was afforded given the reduction in the number of Officers and the additional work that remaining Officers were being asked to do.</p> <p>Members agreed that it was best practice to bring the policy and procedure together to Committee as one comprehensive document, but that their role was to consider the policy only.</p> <p>Members asked how progress was monitored and the Head of Corporate Resources confirmed that an independent “Investors in People” assessor reviews the Council every three years which gives a good indication of how well the Council is doing. In addition, regular manager and staff meetings demonstrated it.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members approved and adopted the policies.</p>	
<p><b>105.</b></p>	<p><b><u>REVIEW OF SALARY SCALES</u></b></p> <p>This item came to be considered as the last item shortly before 10.00pm, which is the cut off point for business to be adjourned unless otherwise agreed. Standing Orders were therefore suspended for the meeting to continue after 10.00pm to allow for a full debate and consideration.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer noted that this report followed a budget report to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee in February, which highlighted a review of salaries</p>	

for senior managers. He noted that a thorough benchmarking exercise had taken place, which had identified a vast range of levels of remuneration for senior managers at other authorities and also took into account additional levels of statutory responsibility.

The report now proposed three new management “spot” grades as set out in the report. Each Head of Service’s post would be evaluated using the Job Evaluation scheme and placed onto the appropriate grade accordingly. The report also proposed a new Band 11 in the Council’s salary scales, which would recognise those employees who were not quite at Head of Service level but would allow for flexibility and give them something to aspire to.

The Chief Financial Officer commented that this review of senior managers salaries was important for recruitment and retention purposes and it has been carried out objectively. He confirmed that it could be funded from within the existing salary budget and added that consultation would be carried out with the Unions and that an Equality Impact Assessment be undertaken to consider equal pay issues.

He went on to explain that the previous report had proposed a start date of 1 April 2014, but that the revised recommendation is a start date of 1 January 2014.

Members agreed that this review was important to ensure that the correct candidates are recruited to the vacant Heads of Service posts. They also acknowledged the hard work of the two remaining Heads of Service and praised them for their work particularly given their substantial workloads.

Members accepted the first two recommendations as being necessary and fair; however, they did not agree with the third recommendation.

They noted that the review was being undertaken as a result of commercial market forces and although they acknowledged the hard work and effort of the two remaining Heads of Service since coming into post some time ago they did not feel it appropriate to backdate the pay as they were asking other Officers to forgo pay rises. They added that Heads of Service should receive equal treatment, but that out of fairness to other Officers the pay should not be backdated to January, but it was right and fair for commercial market rates to apply to their posts.

They concluded that it was reasonable to pay these revised rates from 1 April 2014, and moved and seconded accordingly.

	<p>Members asked what the approximate cost of the increase in the salaries would be and the Chief Financial Officer explained that this would depend on which “spot” grade each Head of Service was placed on and how many Heads of Service there are.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That, subject to consultation with the Trade Unions, Members approved, in principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) A further 3 Management Level grades as “spot” salaries for Heads of Service, of £55,000, £60,000 and £65,000, as a result of benchmarking with comparable Local Authorities;</li> <li>(2) An additional pay Band 11 ranging from £40,254 - £42,032, to address the pat deferential between Band 10 and the first increment of Management Level; and</li> <li>(3) The implementation date of any salary increases are to be effective from 1 April 2014.</li> </ul>	
106.	<p><b><u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u></b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That under Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).</p>	
107.	<p><b><u>PROTECTING THE PUBLIC PURSE FRAUD BRIEFING</u></b></p> <p>This matter was moved up the agenda on the evening and was in fact dealt with earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer noted that this report was produced as a result of a report by the Audit Commission which contained a recommendation that auditors should provide individually tailored fraud briefings to Local Authorities.</p> <p>John Cornett outlined the report and noted that it was intended to provide Members with feedback on the basis of the information which the Council had provided to the Audit Commission. He added that the purpose of the report was to give information about the Council’s performance as compared to other authorities, as well as a review of strategy.</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that a report would be brought back to Members at the next meeting of the Policy,</p>	

	<p>Finance and Development Committee in July.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Members noted the report.</p>	
108.	<p><b><u>ITEM ADMITTED TO THE MEETING UNDER SECTION 100B(4)(b) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972:</u></b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That by reason of special circumstance in that an additional item of business needs to be considered before the next meeting of the Committee, the Chair resolved that the following item should be considered at this Meeting as a matter of urgency.</p>	
109.	<p><b><u>NON-DOMESTIC RATES WRITE-OFFS – OVER £10,000</u></b></p> <p>This matter was moved up the agenda on the evening and was in fact dealt with earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>The Interim Head of Customer Services apologised for the lateness of the report, but noted that a decision by the Committee would assist with the year end process. He explained that the report sought Member approval to write off debts where the Council was unable to recover them, in most cases where the company in question had been dissolved.</p> <p>He confirmed that the Council had tried all alternative means of recovering the debts before agreeing to write them off and added that if the company comes back into existence then the Council would seek to recover the debt at that later date.</p> <p>Members queried the lateness of the report and it was confirmed that this was done out of necessity to ensure that the Council pursued the debts for as long as possible before deciding to agree to write them off.</p> <p>Members also asked that action be taken more swiftly so as to ensure that debts are not allowed to accrue over multiple financial years.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That:</p> <p>(1) Members approved the write-offs as set out in the report; and</p> <p>(2) For year end purposes, the power to write-off these debts is delegated to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.</p>	

**The Meeting Closed at 10.20 p.m.**